

FROM THE FIRELINE TO THE CLASSROOM

Working with Nature enhances the Nature of the Work

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Tax dollars leveraged to fight wildfire and fund public education are getting a 2-for-1 deal with Mr. Marvin Cassler, a Fourth Grade Elementary schoolteacher and wildland firefighter. Mr. Cassler extends valuable life lessons learned on the fireline to teach 9-10 year-olds of Boulton Elementary School in Davis County, Utah. Mr. Cassler credits the organization and efficiency of his classroom to lessons learned while working as a summer wildland firefighter for the Salt Lake Field Office, BLM. There are many correlations between working on a wildfire and work in the classroom. As an educator, Mr. Cassler successfully connects the good

communication and teamwork skills with shared resources learned on the fireline to build trust and respect among his students.

“When I’m leading a squad of firefighters my success means providing a purpose, direction and motivation for firefighters. The same holds true in my classroom, seeing students develop new skills and gain an appreciation of knowledge and learning can be very rewarding,” said Cassler.



“Both careers complement each other,” admits Mr. Cassler, “even my classroom mimics some aspects of fireworld.” Throughout the school year, the students are encouraged to work collaboratively in solving problems by working in groups named after national Hotshot, Helitack, and Smokejumper crews. To be prepared for success later in life the students learn to interact with others, adapt and think through problems logically. Mr. Cassler uses weather kits, compasses, and maps from fire experiences to help children understand abstract concepts, solve problems and develop critical thought processes.



On the fireline, Mr. Cassler and his crew work long hard hours, as a senior firefighter leader he must be able to recognize and respond to individual differences as well as understand emotional needs. The leadership skills gained on the fireline enhance his ability to identify individual and cultural differences in students and employ different teaching methods that will result in higher achievement.

For now, Cassler plans to continue combining his two careers. The 2008 fire season will mark his eighth season as a wildland firefighter with the Salt Lake Field Office, Bureau of Land Management.